U.S. ARMY ACCENTURE FEDERAL SERVICES & U.S. ARMY'S ENTERPRISE CLOUD MANAGEMENT AGENCY

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Speakers:
•Justin Shirk, Managing Director & Cloud Go-to-Market Lead, Accenture Federal Services
•Paul Puckett, Director, Enterprise Cloud Management Agency, U.S. Army

Overview:
The U.S. Army's Enterprise Cloud Management Agency (ECMA) provides end-to-end oversight for all Army cloud processes and activities. This project and solution provide insight on how enterprises can industrialize their cloud management and governance processes, as they work to balance the demands of Cloud First with the complexity offered by today's hybrid environments.

>>Welcome back here on the Cube. I'm John Walls. We are in Las Vegas at the Venetian, and this is Reinvent 22 in the Executive Summit sponsored by Accenture. Glad to have you with us here as we continue our conversations. I'm joined by Paul Puckett, who's the former director of the Enterprise Cloud Management Services at the US Army. Paul, good to see you sir. Hey, you as well, John. Thank you. And Justin, she who is managing director and cloud go to market lead at Accenture Federal Services. Justin, good morning to you. Good morning, John. Yeah, glad to have you both here on the cube. First time too, I believe, right? Yes sir. Well, welcome. I wish we had some kind of baptism or indoctrination, but I'll see what I can come up with in the next 10 minutes for you. Let's talk about the Army, Paul. So enterprise cloud management, US Army. You know, I can't imagine the scale we're talking about here. I can't imagine the solutions we're talking about. I can't imagine the users we're talking about. Just for our folks at home, paint the picture a little bit of what kind of landscape it is that you have to cover with that kind of title.
>>Sure. The United States Army, about 1.4 million people. Obviously a global organization responsible for protecting and defending the United States as part of our sister services in the Department of Defense. And scale often comes up a lot, right? And we talk about any capability to your solution for the United States Army scale is the, the number one thing, but oftentimes people overlook quality first. And actually when you think of the partnership between the Army and Accenture Federal, we thought a lot when it came to establishing the enterprise Cloud

management agency that we wanted to deliver quality first when it came to adopting cloud computing and then scale that quality and not so much be afraid of the, the scale of the army and the size that forces us to make bad decisions. Cuz we wanted to make sure that we proved that there was opportunity and value in the cloud first, and then we wanted to truly scale that. And so no doubt, an immense challenge. The organization's been around for now three years, but I think that we've established irreversible momentum when it comes to modernization, leveraging cloud computing

>>For the army. So let's back up. You kind of threw it in there, the ecma. So this agency was, was your a collaboration, right? To create from the ground up and it's in three years in existence. So let's just talk about that. What went into that thinking? What went into the planning and then how did you actually get it up and run into the extent that it is today?

>>Sure. Well, it was once the enterprise cloud management office. It was a directorate within the, the CIO G six of the United States Army. So at the headquarters, the army, the chief information Officer, and the G six, which is essentially the military arm for all IT capability were once a joint's organization and the ECMO was created to catalyze the adoption of cloud computing. The army had actually been on a, a cloud adoption journey for many years, but there wasn't a lot of value that was actually derived. And so they created the ecma, well, the ECMO at the time brought me in as the director. And so we were responsible for establishing the new strategy for the adoption of cloud. One of the components of that strategy was essentially we needed an opportunity to be able to buy cloud services at scale. And this was part of our buy secure and build model that we had in place. And so part of the buy piece, we put an acquisition strategy together around how we wanted to buy cloud at scale. We called it the cloud account management optimization. OTA

>>Just rolls right off the

>>Tongue, it just rolls right off the tongue. And for those that love acronyms, camo,

>>Which I liked it when I was say cama, I loved that. That was, that was,

>>You always have to have like a tundra, a little

>>Piece of that. Very good. It was good.

>>But at the time it was novetta, no, Nevada's been bought up by afs, but Novea won that agreement. And so we've had this partnership in place now for just about a year and a half for buying cloud computing net scale.

>>So let's talk about, about what you deal with on, on the federal services side here, Justin, in terms of the army. So obviously governance, a major issue, compliance, a major issue, security, you know, paramount importance and all that STEM leads up to quality that Paul was talking about. So when you were looking at this and keeping all those factors in, in your mind, right? I mean, how many, like, oh my God, what kind of days did you have? Oh, well, because this was a handful.

>>Well, it was, but you could see when we were responding to the acquisition that it was really, you know, forward thinking and forward leaning in terms of how they thought about cloud acquisition and cloud governance and cloud management. And it's really kind of a sleepy area like cloud account acquisition. Everyone's like, oh, it's easy to get in the cloud, you know, run your credit card on Amazon and you're in, in 30 seconds or less. That's really not the case inside the federal government, whether it's the army, the Air Force or whoever, right? Those, those are, they're real challenges in procuring and acquiring cloud. And so it was clear from, you know, Paul's office that they understood those challenges and we were excited to really meet them with them.

>>And, and how, I guess from an institutional perspective, before this was right, I I assume very protective, very tight cloistered, right? You, you, in terms of being open to or, or a more open environment, there might have been some pushback was they're not. Right? So dealing with that, what did you find that to be the case? Well, so

>>There's kind of a few pieces to unpacking that. There's a lot of fear in trepidation around

something you don't understand, right? And so part of it is the teaching and training and the, and the capability and the opportunity in the cloud and the ability to be exceptionally secure when it comes to no doubt, the sensitivity of the information of the Department of Defense, but also from an action acquisition strategy perspective, more from a financial perspective, the DOD is accustomed to buying hardware. We make these big bets of these big things to, to live in today's centers. And so when we talk about consuming cloud as a utility, there's a lot of fear there as well, because they don't really understand how to kind of pay for something by the drink, if you will, because it incentivizes them to be more efficient with their utilization of resources.

>>But when you look at the budgeting process of the d od, there really is not that much of incentive for efficiency. The p PPE process, the planning program, budgeting, execution, they care about execution, which is spending money and you can spend a lot of money in the cloud, right? But how are you actually utilizing that? And so what we wanted to do is create that feedback loop and so the utilization is actually fed into our financial systems that help us then estimate into the future. And that's the capability that we partnered with AFS on is establishing the closing of that feedback loop. So now we can actually optimize our utilization of the cloud. And that's actually driving better incentives in the PPE

>>Process. You know, when you think about these keywords here, modernized, digitized, data driven, so on, so forth, I, I don't think a lot of people might connect that to the US government in general just because of, you know, it's a large intentionally slow moving bureaucratic machine, right? Is that fair to characterize it that way? It
>>Is, but not in this case. Right? So what we done,
>>You you totally juxtapose that. Yeah.
>>Yeah. So what we've done is we've really enabled data driven decision making as it relates to cloud accounts and cloud governance. And so we have a, a tool called Cloud Tracker. We deployed for the army at a number of different classifications, and you get a full 360 view of all of your cloud utilization and cloud spend, you know, really up to date within 24 hours of it

occurring, right? And there a lot of folks, you know, they didn't never went into the console, they never looked at what they were spending in cloud previously. And so now you just go to a simple web portal and see the entire entirety of the army cloud spend right there at your fingertips. So that really enables like better decision making in terms of like purchasing savings plans and reserved instances and other sorts of AWS specific tools to help you save money.
>>So Paul, tell me about Cloud Tracker then. Yeah, I mean from the client side then, can you just say this dashboard lays it out for you right? In great detail about what kind of usage, what kind of efficiencies I assume Yeah. What's working, what's not?
>>Absolutely. Well, and, and I think a few things to unpack that's really important here is listen, any cloud service provider has a concept. You can see what you're actually spending. But when it comes to money in the United States government, there are different colors of money. There's regulations when it comes to how money is identified for different capabilities or incentives. And you've gotta be very explicit in how you track and how you spend that money from an auditability perspective. Beyond that, there is a move when it comes to the technology business management, which is the actual labeling of what we actually spend money on for different services or labor or software. And what Cloud Tracker allows us to do is speak the language of the different colors of money. It allows us to also get very fine grain in the actual analysis of, from a TBM perspective, what we're spending on.
>>But then also it has real time hooks into our financial systems for execution. And so what that really does for us is it allows us to complete the picture, not just be able to see our spend in the cloud, but also be able to able to see that spending context of all things in the P P P E process as well as the execution process that then really empowers the government to make better investments. And all we're seeing is either cost avoidance or cost savings simply because we're able to close that loop, like I said. Yep. And then we're able to redirect those funds, retag them, remove them through our actual financial office within the headquarters of the

army, and be able to repurpose that to other modernization efforts that Congress is essentially asking us to invest

>>In. Right. So you know how much money you have, basically. Exactly. Right. You know how much you've already spent, you know how you're spending it, and now you how much you have left,

>>You can provide a reliable forecast for your spend.

>>Right. You know, hey, we're, we're halfway through this quarter, we're halfway through the, the fiscal year, whatever the case might be.

>>Exactly. And the focus on expenditures, you know, the government rates you on, you know, how much have you spent, right? So you have a clear total transparency into what you're going to spend through the rest of the fiscal. Sure.

>>All right. Let's just talk about the relationship quickly then about going forward then in terms of federal services and then what on, on the, the US Army side. I mean, what now you've laid this great groundwork, right? You have a really solid foundation where now what next?

>>We wanna be all things cloud to the army. I mean, we think there's tremendous opportunity to really aid the modernization efforts and governance across the holistic part of the army. So, you know, we just, we want to, we wanna do it all with the Army as much as we can. It's, it's, it's a fantastic

>>Opportunity. Yeah. AFS is, is in a very kind of a strategic role. So as part of the ecma, we own the greater strategy and execution for adoption of cloud on behalf of the entire army. Now, when it comes to delivery of individual capabilities for mission here and there, that's all specific to system owners and different organizations. AFS plays a different role in this instance where they're able to more facilitate the greater strategy on the financial side of the house. And what we've done is we've proven the ability to adopt cloud as a utility rather than this fixed thing, kind of predict the future, spend a whole bunch of money and never use the resource. We're seeing the efficiency for the actual utilization of cloud as a utility. This actually came out as one of the previous NDAs. And so how we actually

address nda, I believe it was 2018 in the adoption of cloud as a utility, really is now cornerstone of modernization across all of the do d and really feeds into the Jo Warfighting cloud capability, major acquisition on behalf of all of the D O D to establish buying cloud as just a common service for everyone.

>>And so we've been fortunate to inform that team of some of our lessons learned, but when it comes to the partnership, we just see camo moving into production. We've been live for now a year and a half. And so there's another two and a half years of runway there. And then AFS also plays a strategic role at part of our cloud enablement division, which is essentially back to that teaching part, helping the Army understand the opportunity of cloud computing, align the architectures to actually leverage those resources and then deliver capabilities that save soldier's >>Lives. Well, you know, we've, we've always known that the Army does its best work on the ground, and you've done all this groundwork for the military, so I'm not surprised, right? It's, it's a winning formula. Thanks to both of you for being with us here in the executive summit. Great conversation. Awesome. Thanks for having us. A good deal. All right. Thank you. All right. You are watching the executive summit sponsored by Accenture here at Reinvent 22, and you're catching it all on the cube, the leader in high tech coverage.